

31st & Pearl

Bloggedy . . . Blog . . Blog

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Working from the Coast

I'm working at my Southern Miss Gulf Coast office today. Am looking forward to meetings with faculty and staff there.

Is it just us, or is USM President Martha Saunders' blog becoming a daily grind that paints a picture of the job of USM's CEO as a low stress, minimal-sweat exercise? The 14-Feb-08 entry, shown above, is a good example of what you get from a chief executive whose academic credentials are lacking. And, that's putting it mildly. A recent interview with Saunders by an in-state publication revealed that the extent of academic writing done by Saunders over the past decades essentially begins and ends with her dissertation, which she hopes one day to mold into a work of *fiction*.

To be sure, the gulf between Saunders' and former President Shelby Thames' academic credentials knows no end. That Saunders' administrative prowess lacks the skill and polish of another former USM President, Aubrey Lucas, is an understatement. And, nothing to date indicates that Saunders will fight the powers with anything similar to the zeal in doing so shown by Horace Fleming, yet another former USM chief. More and more it seems as though USM went and hired another prez and all we got is this d#*n blog! (Sound like a good idea for a t-shirt?)

But, let's not dismiss the daily (almost) blog completely. With each new day and each new entry, the USM community gets a taste of how inadequate the "secret searches" program for hiring new presidents for Mississippi's public universities can be. With all of the "bloggedy . . . blog . . blog" from Saunders, maybe the next search will be wide open, and maybe those in charge of it will select an academic, and not an image-maker. Or, one can always hope . . . at least.

31st & Pearl is a series housed at usmnews.net that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.